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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[1](#). Mideast

[1](#)2. Iraq

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Key stories in the media:  
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Israel Radio and leading Israeli Internet news web sites reported that this morning, a suicide bomber approached a roadblock in Jabara village near the West Bank town of Tulkarm and blew himself up. The media reported that an Israeli and three Palestinians were killed and three Israelis were wounded in the bombing. Some media reports mentioned two suicide bombers. The media quoted Israeli security sources as saying that the incident prevented a large-scale terrorist attack in Israel. Leading media cited the belief of Palestinian sources that Islamic Jihad was behind the attack.

Leading media reported that last night the IDF carried out aerial strikes and used artillery fire in the Gaza "no-go" zone imposed by Israel. Israel Radio quoted IDF sources as saying that the no-go policy will continue until Palestinian fire stops. The radio reported that the PA warned Israel not to harm members of its security forces in the buffer zone.

Israel Radio reported that Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora strongly condemned the Katyusha rocket attacks against Israel, and quoted him as saying that the IAF fire and overflights of Lebanon are destabilizing his country. The radio reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan condemned the rocket attacks and called on the Lebanese government to deploy its troops in southern Lebanon.

Israel Radio and The Jerusalem Post reported that on Wednesday, the Quartet urged all participants in the PA's legislative elections to condemn terror, recognize Israel's right to exist, and disarm. The Jerusalem Post reported that the Quartet called on the PA to issue a "code of conduct" on the issue.

Israel Radio said that Annan's Lebanon statement and the Quartet's comments on the PA elections show an important U.S. influence on the UN.

In its lead story, Yediot wrote that IDF Intelligence chief Maj. Gen Aharon Zeevi-Farkash told the newspaper that during a clash along Israel's border about one month ago, Hizbullah launched sophisticated rockets that had been sent from Moscow to Damascus. Zeevi-Farkash was quoted as saying that this exposed the "ugly face" of Russia and Syria.

Ha'aretz and Yediot reported that on Wednesday, Kadima's Knesset faction approved the party platform, which says that the existence of a sovereign, Jewish, and democratic state necessitates relinquishing parts of the Land of Israel (i.e. Israel, including the

territories). The platform does not detail the areas to be evacuated and the extent of the withdrawal in the framework of a permanent-status agreement. The platform also includes an assent in principle to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Maariv bannered a call by Labor Chairman Amir Peretz on former party chairman Shimon Peres to leave Sharon's party Kadima and come back home. The newspaper cited internal Labor Party polls that show that the party's ratings have dropped to 17 percent.

Yediot reported that Iran recently warned Turkey not to serve as an aerial base for Israeli attacks against Iran's nuclear installations. The newspaper reported that the visit of IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz to Turkey last week only fueled Iran's concerns. Yediot reported that the Russian press is also highlighting the issue of a possible Israeli aerial offensive against Iran. The Jerusalem Post reported that a high-ranking diplomat told the newspaper this week that Russia has no interest in Iran obtaining nuclear weapons.

Ha'aretz reported that the Justice Ministry told the newspaper on Wednesday that Attorney General Menachem Mazuz will examine, together with the Prime Minister's Office, a systematic way to determine in what circumstances the prime minister would be judged "incapacitated."

The Jerusalem Post reported that "in an unprecedented move," the Christian Coalition of America, a major conservative Christian advocacy group in the U.S., will include the voting records of American legislators on Israel in its annual National Voter Guide.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Wednesday, former O/C Southern Command, Maj. Gen. (reserves) Yom-Tov Samia warned that a section of the fence route near Mevaseret Zion (a western Jerusalem suburb) would enable snipers to hit cars on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. Samia was speaking during a High Court of Justice hearing on a petition submitted by Mevaseret Zion residents against a section of the fence.

Over the past few days, the media reported that the Shin Bet has prohibited Israeli Arab author and journalist Antoine Shalhath from leaving the country until the end of the month for fear he may harm state security. The media said that the measure raised angry reactions in the Arab community.

Yediot reported that the U.S. Senate has recently passed a law imposing higher fines on employers of illegal foreign workers. The newspaper wrote that hundreds of young Israelis in the U.S. could be affected by the new law.

Ha'aretz reported that the leader of the northern branch of Israel's Islamic Movement, Sheikh Raed Salah, has called for work to stop on the museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem, arguing that part of it is to be built on top of a Muslim cemetery.

Maariv quoted senior officials involved in the investigation of Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Danny Ayalon, as saying that the probe was biased. The newspaper, which noted that the affair started with mutual accusations between Ayalon and FM Silvan Shalom, reported that the State Attorney's Office rejects most of the "special investigator's" recommendations.

Israel Radio reported that a Federal judge in Cleveland ordered the deportation of John Demjanjuk, the convicted former Nazi concentration camp guard, to Ukraine.

All media reported that Danny Rebeck, 36, originally from London, emigrated from the U.S. on Wednesday. Rebeck outran Hurricane Katrina by riding his bike 40 km to catch the last flight from New Orleans, where he lost his home and most of his possessions.

Leading media cited statistics released on Wednesday by the GOI's Central Bureau of Statistics, according to which Israel counts 6,986,300 residents, 76 percent of whom are Jews, 20 percent Arabs, and 4 percent "others" -- mostly non-Arab Christians.

Ha'aretz quoted an organizer of a tour to Iraq as saying that a group of Iraqi Jews who were born in Iraq are planning a spring trip to the Kurdish-controlled zone, and that they hope to at least approach Mosul, the city where many of them lived. The report is reprinted from an AP dispatch.

Yediot cited the suspicion of the New York Police Department that an unnamed Israeli man, whose body was found Tuesday in his apartment after a fire broke out, was murdered.

Channel 10-TV and Ha'aretz published the results of a survey conducted by Prof. Camille Fuchs of the Amanet Group's Dialogue Institute among Likud party members of the Likud's Central Committee. The poll shows that MK Gideon Sa'ar is the most popular figure in the committee (after Knesset Member Binyamin Netanyahu and FM Silvan Shalom, whose spots are guaranteed).

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Wednesday, PM Sharon's adviser Eyal Arad presented to the Kadima faction a report claiming that immigrants from the Former Soviet Union will support Kadima more than any other party. The poll found that 38 percent of Russian immigrants intended to vote for Kadima, 25 percent for Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, and just 12 percent and 6 percent respectively for the two parties that received the most support from Russian immigrants in the last elections, Likud and Shinui.

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**1. Mideast:**  
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Summary:  
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Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Continued attacks [along Israel's northern border], as well as the clear fingerprint of the Damascus-based Islamic Jihad on the Qassam rockets coming from Gaza in the direction of Ashkelon may put Israel and Syria on a collision course."

Liberal op-ed writer Yael Paz-Melamed commented in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Why does no one employ expulsion warrants from the West Bank against those who time after time, with a big smile on their faces, sabotage olive trees and their crops?"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "While it is at its strongest, Israel is finding itself under an almost existential threat.... In any case, Israel shouldn't be envied."

Block Quotes:  
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**I. "Collision Course in the North"**

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (December 29): "Iran's potential to create a nuclear bomb and Palestinian Qassam rockets top the political agenda, and too little time is being spent on another threat. Under certain circumstances it might have greater impact on the elections in Israel: Katyusha rockets coming from Lebanon. The bombardment of Kiryat Shmona and Shlomi on Tuesday are worrying reminders.... The danger of escalation in the north also reflects events involving Syria. The report of United Nations investigator Detlev Mehlis on the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri left Syria less battered than it feared, and the German investigator left the region rather quickly.... Three months before elections in Israel, the situation on the northern border is more explosive than it has been in a long time. Syrian President Bashar Assad may think after the Mehlis report that violence pays off. But continued attacks, as well as the clear fingerprint of the Damascus-based Islamic Jihad on the Qassam rockets coming from Gaza in the direction of Ashkelon may put Israel and Syria on a collision course."

**II. "And We Are All Silent"**

Liberal op-ed writer Yael Paz-Melamed commented in popular, pluralist Maariv (December 29): "Two days ago, the Construction and Housing Ministry published tenders for the construction of 230 housing units in the West Bank... Worst of all: some settlers, mostly young extremists, are making a laughingstock of the state, the rule of law and the law-enforcement authorities, and they have good reasons for behaving that way. The connection between these three facts: the settlers in the West Bank were and remain the lords of that land, beyond the fence, beyond the laws of Israel, even beyond our own eyes, which are tightly shut to what is

going on in the West Bank. Hooliganism runs rampant there, with no appropriate response from the IDF and the police, and we are all silent. These days political leadership is drawing up party platforms, without providing the slightest response to the rising vandalism and violence of Jews towards Palestinians.... Is it any wonder if what we see today in the West Bank is the massive strengthening of Hamas at Fatah's expense?.... Why does no one employ expulsion warrants from the West Bank against those who time after time, with a big smile on their faces, sabotage olive trees and their crops? How did 500 Jews manage to turn thousands of Palestinian residents of Hebron into haters of Israel to the last drop of their blood. It's true that we can entirely despair of the police. But where is the army? Where is the GSS? Where are all of us? At this time the image of the country is being shaped for at least the next few years. The Labor Party, headed by Amir Peretz, must insert in its platform a promise to handle these settlers with a strict hand, as well the dozens of illegal outposts, all of which began like a summer camp and ended like a cancer. We have to expropriate the West Bank from the settlers and restore managing relations between us and the Palestinian to Israel's political leadership."

### III. "2006"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (December 29): "The year that will die this week has not been beneficial to Israel, which still bends under the yoke of fighting against the Palestinians and finds it hard to shape its character as a developed society and matures in a hostile world. Today, more than ever, when it seems that Israel has reached records in the strategic and security domains and that, for the first time in its history, it has no serious enemies, an existential strategic threat that Israel has never known is dawning toward the new year 2006: nuclear bombs from Iran, a crazy country. This is an irony of fate: while it is at its strongest, Israel is finding itself under an almost existential threat. In 2006, Israel will have to overcome the Iranian hurdle with the help of the U.S. and the European countries, through the diplomatic option and conceivably through the military one. In any case, Israel shouldn't be envied."

### 12. Iraq:

#### Summary:

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in an editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The President of the U.S. will be eager to obtain any kind of diplomatic achievement during the upcoming year; Israel often must pay the price for an American president's hunger."

#### Block Quotes:

### "2200"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in an editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (December 29): "The President of the United States would have liked 2005 to be erased from the calendar ... and not to be remembered.... Two thousand two hundred caskets draped in the Stars and Stripes, the faint sound of trumpets, salvos of honor, and the tears of widows and orphans have upset the support [for Bush].... Not only is he now a 'lame duck,' but he is worse off than that. Why is this important to us Israelis? It is because any American sneezing causes a cold in Israel, and also -- perhaps -- because the President of the U.S. will be eager to obtain any kind of diplomatic achievement during the upcoming year; Israel often must pay the price for an American president's hunger."

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